

Washington, DC- The House of Representatives today voted unanimously in favor of the Terrorist Rewards Enhancement Act (H.R. 2329), authorizing the Secretary of State to offer cash rewards to officers and employees of foreign governments for information leading to the capture of the world's most-wanted terrorists like Osama bin Laden.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), the author of the legislation, called the vote a major step forward in the hunt for Bin Laden and the overall War on Terror.

"Somewhere along Pakistan's Afghan border, there might be a government employee or military officer who does not make a lot of money and happens to know where Osama bin Laden is hiding," said Kirk, a Naval Reserve Intelligence Officer who has led two official missions to the Afghan-Pakistan border to evaluate the effectiveness of the State Department's rewards program. "Creating a more flexible terrorist rewards program improves our odds in bringing the most-wanted man in the world to justice."

Working with Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Richard Griffin and U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Ryan Crocker, Kirk spearheaded an effort last year that enacted reforms doubling the reward for Osama bin Laden to \$50 million and ordering the State Department launch radio and television ads in native languages throughout remote regions of northwest Pakistan. In 2005, the United States launched an unprecedented rewards PR program in six languages across several newspapers, radio and television networks. The campaign generated dozens of tips against the "Al Qaeda Core" in remote regions of Pakistan.

The United States successfully used rewards to crack a number of terrorist cases in past years. Ramzi Yusef, an author of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was arrested on a tip given to the rewards program. Mir Amal Kasi, who killed Americans in Northern Virginia, was arrested in Pakistan on another tip. Saddam Hussein's two murderous sons, Uday and Qusai, met their end after a timely rewards program tip. In total, the United States has paid more than \$50 million in rewards for the arrest of people who murdered Americans or were United Nations War Criminals.

"The reforms passed unanimously by the House today would increase the effectiveness of the new newspaper, radio and TV rewards campaign scheduled for Pakistan next spring. Innovations in our rewards program will make it more likely that we fulfill our promise to bring

September 11's top criminal to justice," Kirk said.

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